Langley Dam History

Written by Administrator Friday, 25 November 2011 16:24 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 February 2018 12:09

A brief history;

Langley Dam is part of the rich industrial heritage of South Northumberland. The North Pennines had a thriving mining industry, producing predominantly coal and lead. The chimneys, which can still be seen on the tops of the surrounding hills, bear testament to this. The lake was built in the 1800s to produce power and cooling for the local smelt mill which was based around the site of the present Langley Sawmill on the A695, ½ mile North East of the dam. Built by Irish navvies, the Dam is produced by 2 dam walls; a short one on the East side, and the longer one which runs from the South west to the North west corner. Half way along the east bank is a valve which allows the controlled release of water into a series of channels; allowing the water to be directed to where it was needed. The Dam is about 15 feet deep at its deepest point.

Fishing history;

Langley Dam was fished in the 1950s and 60s by the Northumbrian Federation and a few of our older anglers can still remember this. It was stocked with brown trout and they were encouraged to run up the inlet to spawn.

There is a large population of perch, once estimated by a marine biologist to be as high as 30,000 from their stunted size. A few carp were introduced in the early 80's for an experiment set up by Newcastle University looking into the growth potential of fish as a food source for the increasing world population.

In the early 80's Derek Robb, of Robbs of Hexham, was living in the house on the north east of the lake (later bought by Catherine Cookson).

Derek was a keen fisherman and tried stocking rainbows and brook trout, most of which disappeared very quickly!!

In 1985 we were forced to spend a lot of money to meet the requirements of the Reservoirs Act. This involved dropping the level of the lake by 2 feet (hence the reason the boat house is so far off the water line.)

In 1986, with Derek's guidance, we decided to open a commercial fishery to recover some of

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the cost of the work we had done.

Norreen and Fred White, who was working on the farm at the time, ran the fishery from a shed in the old brickworks on the north side of the lake. In 1988 Fred moved to a new farm and Johnny and Margaret Hope took over the reins, supervising the move to the new lodge and car park in 1995. They looked after things until their retirement in 2002 when Fred and Norreen returned.